
Forms of (De)Politicization in the Development Discourse

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Résumé

This presentation is concerned with the analysis of depoliticization and politicization within the development discourse. It builds on the work of scholars from the field of critical development studies such as James Ferguson (1994), Will Hout (2012) or Tania Murray Li (2007). It offers a categorization of the concepts of depoliticization and politicization into several categories. Depoliticization is achieved through a spatial delimitation that includes local reasons for poverty, local instruments to solve the problem of poverty such as access to market that is represented as inherently benign, microfinance or education and local legitimization of development projects. Depoliticization can be also based on technological solutions, on the omission of agents, on a particular temporal focus and on an explicit invocation of a consensus among potentially conflicting actors within development cooperation. There is a politicizing potential in the discourses of good governance and of policy coherence and in global education. On the other hand, politicization of unequal gender relations may have depoliticizing consequences. The main relevance of the discussion of politicization for the study of political economy is to show how political discourses such as the development discourse can contribute to the obfuscation of conflicting (ie, political) issues. The categorization of various forms of depoliticization shows how this is done in practice. The presentation of the forms of politicization or of the forms of potential politicization whgos the emancipatory possibilities in the current discourse, or on the other hand further and more insidious ways of depoliticizing practices. In sum, in Marxist terms, an analysis of depoliticization is an analysis of ideology that is nowadays more relevant than ever. The categorization is based on research of development organization (national, international and non-governmental).

Mots-Clés: development discourse, depoliticization, ideology

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